

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SCCT-01 IO-10 SAM-01 /091 W

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R 070527Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3291

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 0100

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SA

SUBJECT: MINPET YAMANI'S REMARKS ON OPEC KIDNAPPING

1. SUMMARY: THIS TELEGRAM FORWARDS A TRANSLATION OF THE PRESS ACCOUNT OF MINPETROLEUM YAMANI'S COMMENTS ON SAUDI TELEVISION JANUARY 4 ON THE OPEC KIDNAPPING. FROM HIS COMMENTS IT APPEARS THAT "CARLOS" EXPECTED A FRIENDLY WELCOME TO LIBYA FOR WHICH PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE AND WAS ANGRY AND DISAPPOINTED AT HAVING TO CHANGE PLANS AFTER ARRIVAL THERE. IT ALSO WOULD APPEAR THAT YAMANI'S AND AMOUZAGER'S LIVES MAY HAVE BEEN IN DANGER UP TO THE TIME THEY FINALLY DISEMBARKED IN ALGIERS, END SUMMARY.

2. BEGIN TEXT: ACCORDING TO MINISTER YAMANI, CARLOS' ORIGINAL ITINERARY WAS VIENNA-TRIPOLI (WHERE THE NON-UNCLASSIFIED

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ARAB MINISTERS, EXCEPT THE IRANIAN, AND THE LIBYAN AND

ALGERIAN MINISTERS TOGETHER WITH SOME OTHER DELEGATION MEMBERS WOULD BE RELEASED)--BAGHDAD (FOR SETTING FREE THE IRAQI MINISTER, AND PERHAPS THE KUWAITI MINISTER IF A STOP-OVER IN KUWAIT IS SKIPPED AND THEN ADEN, THE FINAL DESTINATION. HOWEVER AT THE REQUEST OF ALGERIA--WHICH CARLOS TERMED "A REVOLUTIONARY STATE WHOSE INVITATION CANNOT BE TURNED DOWN." CARLOS DECIDED TO MAKE ALGIERS THE FIRST STOP IN HIS JOURNEY, "DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE DON'T COOPERATE WITH THEM. WE SHALL BE THERE FOR TWO HOURS FOR SETTING FREE THE MINISTERS I ALREADY DECIDED TO RELEASE IN LIBYA, AND FOR BROADCASTING THE STATEMENT WHICH, I DON'T THINK THEY WILL REFUSE," CARLOS IS SAID TO HAVE TOLD YAMANI.

3. WHEN ASKED BY YAMANI IF HE EXPECTED DIFFICULTIES IN LIBYA, CARLOS LOOKED ASTONISHED AND SAID: "ON THE CONTRARY, THE PRIME MINISTER SHALL BE PRESENT TO RECEIVE US, AND A BOEING PLANE SHALL BE READY TO TAKE US TO BAGHDAD." AND WHEN ASKED IF THEY WILL MAKE A STOPOVER AT DAMASCUS CARLOS REPLIED: "I TOLD YOU MY OPINION OF THE SYRIANS; THEY HAVE BECOME DANGEROUS AND CORRUPT, AND WE ARE NOT LANDING IN THEIR TERRITORY."

4. MINISTER YAMANI DEFENDED ALGERIA'S STAND. HE SAID THE ALGERIANS DID THEIR BEST TO CONVINCE CARLOS TO RELEASE US ALL IN RETURN FOR RESPONDING TO ALL HIS DEMANDS, HOWEVER HE INSISTED ON CONTINUING HIS TRIP AS PLANNED. HE EVEN DECLINED TO PROMISE THEM NOT TO HURT YAMANI AND THE IRANIAN MINISTER. HE PROMISED TO RETURN FROM BAGHDAD AND MAKE ALGIERS HIS LAST STOP UNLESS HE RECEIVED, WHILE IN BAGHDAD, AN ORDER TO PROCEED TO ADEN. THE RELEASED ALGERIAN MINISTER OF ENERGY RETURNED TO THE PLANE WITH CARLOS TO ACCOMPANY US TO LIBYA.

5. MINISTER YAMANI DISCLOSED THAT THE ASSAILANTS SEEMED TO BE AT EASE WHEN THE PLANE TOOK OFF ENROUTE TO TRIPOLI. WINDOW CURTAINS WERE ROLLED UP, FOOD WAS SERVED, THE TERRORISTS STARTED TALKING WITH US FREELY, AND CARLOS MADE MENTION OF THE ALGERIANS' ATTEMPTS TO SAVE MY LIFE AND THAT OF THE IRANIAN MINISTER, AND EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT "FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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THIS DEEP CONCERN OVER TWO REACTIONARIES." AND HE ONCE MORE TOLD US ABOUT THE AIRLINER WHICH THE LIBYANS WOULD PLACE AT HIS DISPOSAL, OUR TRIP TO BAGHDAD, AND THENCE OUR RETURN TO ALGIERS UNLESS ORDERED TO PROCEED TO ADEN. AT THIS POINT HIS COMRADE, KHALID THE LEBANESE (WHO WAS THE SECOND MAN IN THE GANG) INTERRUPTED THROUGH THE PLANE'S MICROPHONE TO ANNOUNCE THAT PREMIER ABD AL-SALAM JALLOUDD SHALL BE AT HAND TO RECEIVE US AT TRIPOLI'S AIR-

PORT. WHEN THE PLANE LANDED AFTER TWO HOURS AT TRIPOLI AIRPORT, THE TERRORISTS WERE IN A GOOD MOOD, THEIR FIREARMS AT EASE EXCEPT FOR ORDINARY PISTOLS. NO ONE ORDERED US TO ROLL DOWN THE CURTAINS. NONETHELESS, PREMIER JALLOUD WAS 90 MINUTES LATE IN ARRIVING AT THE AIRPORT. WHEN HE ARRIVED AT 2030, THE PLANE'S DOOR WAS OPENED, THE LIBYAN KIDNAPPED MINISTER DISEMBARKED TOGETHER WITH THE SECOND MAN IN THE BAND, KHALID, AND WERE AWAY FOR MORE THAN SIXTY MINUTES DURING WHICH THE PLANE'S DOOR WAS OPEN AND WE WERE MOVING INSIDE AND GOING TO THE TOILET WITHOUT ASKING PERMISSION AS HAD BEEN THE CASE BEFORE. WHEN I ASKED CARLOS WHY HE DID NOT GO HIMSELF FOR NEGOTIATIONS AS HE DID IN ALGERIA, HE SAID "IT IS THE MENTALITY OF THE LIBYANS--AN ARAB MUST GO TO SEE THEM--AND ADDITIONALLY, THINGS HERE IN LIBYA ARE EASY AND UNCOMPLICATED."

6. AN HOUR LATER, KHALID RETURNED ACCOMPANIED BY BOTH THE LIBYAN PREMIER AND THE OIL MINISTER. CARLOS WAS AT THE PLANE'S DOOR TO RECEIVE HIM. THE LIBYAN PREMIER PASSED BEFORE US HEADING TOWARD THE OTHER MINISTERS; TALKED TO THEM GENTLY, THEN RETURNED TO GREET ME AND THE IRANIAN MINISTER AND TO SAY THAT OUR LIVES WERE NOT IN PERIL. THEN HE WENT WITH CARLOS TO THE FRONT OF THE PLANE WHERE THEY TALKED ALONE FOR A LONG TIME.

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7. WHEN THE LIBYAN PREMIER AND HIS OIL MINISTER LEFT THE PLANE, CARLOS TOLD US "THERE HAS BEEN A MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH WILL DELAY US AT TRIPOLI AIRPORT FOR SOMETIME. THE BOEING 737 WHICH THE LIBYANS PREPARED FOR US IS AT TOBRUK AIRPORT; IT CAN'T MAKE A NON-STOP TRIP TO BAGHDAD UNLESS THE STORM OUTSIDE SUBSIDES. THE LIBYAN PREMIER IS DOING HIS BEST TO CHARTER A 707 FROM AN AIRLINES COMPANY OR PROCURE IT FROM ONE OF THE ARAB STATES."

8. THE TERRORISTS AT THIS POINT BECAME NERVOUS; AT MID-NIGHT CARLOS STARTED ATTACKING THE LIBYANS OPENLY SAYING "THEY ARE UNDISCIPLINED PEOPLE, AND ONE CANNOT COOPERATE WITH THEM." CARLOS DECIDED TO FLY IN THE PRESENT PLANE TO TOBRUK WHERE WE WOULD SWITCH TO THE LIBYAN 737. HOWEVER THE AUSTRIAN PILOT REGRETTED HE DID NOT KNOW THE LOCATION OF TABRUK. SO HE ORDERED HIM TO FLY BACK TO
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ALGIERS. BEFORE TAKING OFF, HE SET FREE SOME HOSTAGES, INCLUDING TWO MEMBERS OF THE SAUDI DELEGATION WHO WERE FORCIBLY REMOVED FROM THE PLANE.

9. WHEN ONE OF MY RELEASED COMRADES ENTREATED CARLOS NOT TO HURT ME, CARLOS REPLIED, ALMOST BURSTING INTO LAUGHTER: "I HAVE RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM MY BOSSES HERE IN LIBYA NOT TO HARM HIM OR THE IRANIAN MINISTER. I CAN PROMISE NOW THEIR SAFETY, A THING WHICH I COULDN'T PROMISE THE ALGERIANS."

10. ON OUR WAY TO ALGIERS, CARLOS ASKED THE PILOT TO LAND AT TUNIS, AND WHEN HE WAS DENIED LANDING PERMISSION (THE TUNISIANS PUT OFF AIRPORT LIGHTS WHEN HE ORDERED THE PILOT TO LAND FORCIBLY), HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVES BUT TO GO TO ALGIERS.

11. YAMANI SAID THAT AFTER LANDING IN ALGIERS AND AFTER SUBSEQUENT TALKS WITH THE ALGERIAN OFFICIALS, CARLOS RETURNED TO THE PLANE, CONFERRED ALONE WITH HIS COMRADES, AND THEN SAID ADDRESSING ME AND THE IRANIAN MINISTER, "WE HAVE DECIDED TO SET YOU ALL FREE AT MID-DAY, AND SO YOUR LIVES ARE NO MORE IN PERIL."

12. "HOWEVER THE TERRORISTS DECISION WAS CONTRARY TO WHAT CARLOS INFORMED US; IT PROVIDED FOR OUR EXECUTION--MYSELF AND MY IRANIAN COLLEAGUE, AT 0700 IN THE MORNING. I DON'T KNOW HOW THE ALGERIANS KNEW OF THE TERRORISTS' DECISION. THEY ASKED CARLOS THROUGH THE WIRELESS TO GO DOWN TO SEE THEM. FOLLOWING A LONG ABSENCE, CARLOS RETURNED TO THE PLANE TO BREATHE OUT HIS OUTRAGE, THREATENING THAT THE DECISION TO KILL US WAS IRREVOCABLE, AND THAT THEIR HANDS WOULD REACH US SOON. THEN HE SAID THEY WOULD LEAVE THE PLANE, AND AFTER THAT WE MUST TURN OURSELVES OVER TO THE ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES WHICH WE DID."

YAMANI POINTED OUT THAT ALGERIAN SECURITY MEN FOILED THE TERRORIST KHALID'S ATTEMPT TO KILL HIM AT THE AIRPORT WHILE TALKING TO HIM IN THE AIRPORT LOUNGE (KHALID CONCEALED A PISTOL IN HIS ARMPIT.) END TEXT.
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13. NOTE: THE OCCASIONAL ODD SHIFTS IN THE ABOVE TEXT BETWEEN FIRST AND THIRD PERSON REFLECT THE ARABIC TEXT, WHICH DRIFTS INTO AND OUT OF DIRECT QUOTATION WITHOUT REGARD FOR PUNCTUATION.
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